

## Tips for parents to



### Media Violence

As a parent, you can help! Provide your kids with a healthier lifestyle by taking charge of the violence in their lives. Limit viewing, provide choices, and talk about what is being shown. Below are ten tips to help you help your kids. Don't be discouraged if you can't manage all of them right away. Make a start!

**1 Set Clear Limits.** Set clear ground rules, such as: no television or video games before school, during daytime hours, during meals, or before homework is done. Limit daily T.V. viewing and video game playing time to one or two hours or less.

**2 Know what your kids are watching.** Watch at least one episode of your children's favorite T.V. shows. Ask the kids what they like about the programs. Discuss both "good" and "bad" shows, movies, or video games. This activity gives you the chance to discover and correct a child's faulty impressions.

**3 Don't use the T.V. as a babysitter.** It is very easy to tell your children to "go watch T.V." when you are busy (or can't think of anything else for them to do). Using the television, movies, or video games as a babysitter may be convenient, but it can begin a pattern of indiscriminate viewing and game playing. And, if your children are in a daycare setting, make sure they are not watching television as a substitute for games or other activities.

**4 Don't Make the T.V. the focal point.** Avoid placing the television in the most prominent location in your home, and keep T.V. sets out of your children's rooms. Families watch less television and play fewer video games if the T.V. is not literally at the center of their lives. A television in a child's room encourages more use and diminishes your ability to monitor its use.

**5 Offer other enjoyable activities.** Once you turn off the T.V., be ready with some other fun activity to take its place. Encourage reading, music-making, hobbies, sports, and social activities as alternatives to television. Help children learn to enjoy active (and interactive) forms of entertainment.

**6 Choose what to watch.** Select the T.V. programs your children watch as you would choose a movie. Decide what to watch and turn off the television afterward. Avoid "channel surfing" and never use television as background noise.

**7 Ban unacceptable programs.** Forbid your children from watching T.V. programs and movies you strongly oppose. Teach children critical viewing skills and be clear about why you avoid certain programs, movies, and video games.

**8 Identify quality programs.** Teach children to be critical of overly commercial, simplistic, violent, and unrealistic programming.

**9 Discuss media violence.** Talk with your children about how T.V. and movie characters solve their problems. Ask your children to come up with more realistic or nonviolent solutions. Talk about the violence promoted in video games. Discuss alternative ways to resolve conflict.

**10 Have a voice in local T.V. programming.** Call or write your local stations to express your approval or disapproval of children's programming as well as commercial content.

## **MEDIA VIOLENCE IS A HEALTH HAZARD**

Children in the U.S. are exposed to high levels of media violence. Research shows that there are about 5 violent acts per hour on prime-time T.V., and 20-25 violent acts on Saturday morning children's programs.

According to estimates, by the time young people graduate from high school, they have viewed over 200,000 acts of violence. This heavy exposure to violence on T.V. and in video games results in aggressive attitudes and behaviors, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Too much time in front of a T.V., movie or video screen can be unhealthy.

- Time spent viewing T.V. or movies or playing video games is time spent not exercising.
- Food commercials aimed at children promote unhealthy foods and don't give children the full picture about a well-balanced diet.
- Television programs and movies glamorize alcohol use, smoking, and drug use and portray these actions as risk-free.
- Sexual activity is commonplace on television and in the movies, sending the message that everybody does it, and without consequences.



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### **Dover Office:**

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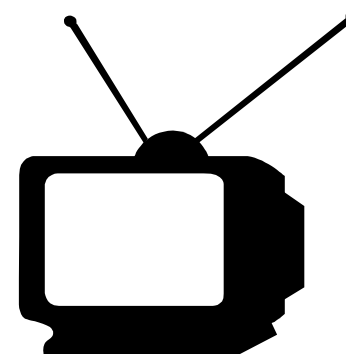
### **Georgetown Office:**

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In appreciation to the Minnesota Medical Association for allowing the use of their information.

# **10 Tips for Parents to Stop Media Violence**



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